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four younger men. The work of compiling such a record as this is a great labor, but is a most useful task, and the results are a great boon to those situated away from libraries. To such the purchase of the Record is earnestly commended. It is published by Mr. J. Van Voorst, Paternoster row, London.

THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION CHECK-LIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS.<sup>1</sup>—This catalogue of North American birds, as the latest issued, is the most complete, and will be a useful work of reference to ornithologists. The volume also contains a digest of rules of nomenclature adopted by the American Ornithologists' Union. There has always been a large proportion of authors of works on birds with literary rather than scientific tastes, so that the conclusions of an ornithologists' union will require careful scrutiny on the part of the scientific investigator. The danger from the side of letters is the subordination of the true interests of scientific research to red tape and literary archæology. The way to do this is to excuse authors from giving definitions to the new words they introduce, and so to open wide the doors to amateurism and its attendant confusion and redundancy. We are glad to observe that the new code agrees with the old ones in requiring that new generic names shall be defined in order to be adopted. But a few pages later the code contradicts itself by saying that when an author describes a new species which belongs to a new genus, it is not necessary to give a separate description of the genus, although a new generic name may be proposed. The code on this point therefore appears to us to be without authority either way, and we have to rest on the older codes, which require definitions in all cases. Nor do we find the code clear as to the necessity of furnishing definitions for divisions of higher rank.

Another objection we find is that it requires the use of an old specific name when the generic name later proposed is identical with it. Such names are really monomial, and no more to be adopted than quadrinomial ones. The question is, however, rather one of taste, than of any serious moment.

Apart from these points we concur heartily in the rules of the code.

#### RECENT BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS.

*Lydekker, R.*—Note on the zoölogical position of the genus *Microchoerus*. Both from the Quart. Jour. Geol. Soc., 1885. All from the author.

*Cook, G. H.*—Annual report of the State geologist of New Jersey, 1885. From the author.

*Selwyn, A. R. C.*—Summary report of the operations of Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada to 31st Dec., 1885. From the author.

*Bureau of Education.*—Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1883-'84. From the department.

<sup>1</sup>New York, American Ornithologists' Union. 1886, 8vo, pp. 392. For sale by L. S. Foster, 35 Pine street, New York city. \$3.